



"Offering our community more than a home"

Damp and Mould Policy

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CHA Objectives:

- To provide quality, affordable housing that meets the changing needs of our customers and to ensure fair access to housing within our area.
- To manage the houses provided, in a professional and cost effective manner, for the benefit of our local community and the environment.
- To provide a first class maintenance service which offers value for money and ensures the comfort and safety of our residents while achieving high levels of satisfaction

Regulatory Standards:

- The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
- The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these objectives.
- The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being and economic effectiveness.
- The governing body bases its decision on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the Association's purpose.

Any breach or non-compliance with legislation/regulatory requirements in relation to this Policy constitutes a Notifiable Event and the Regulator will be informed via the SHR Portal.

This policy can be made available on request in a variety of different formats, such as on tape, in large print and translated into other languages.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this Policy is to ensure appropriate control measures are in place to adequately manage damp and mould within properties.
- 1.2 The procedures detailed within this section have been written to ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that problems with damp and mould are identified and dealt with promptly.
- 1.3 The policy, and the practices identified within, will be open to internal and external audit in line with the Association's Health & Safety Audit programme.

2. Definitions

"Competent Person" – person suitably trained and qualified by knowledge and practical experience, and provided with the necessary instructions, to enable the required task (s) to be carried out correctly.

"Penetrating damp" is damp which results from issues with the building which leads to water ingress such as leaking pipes, cracks and blocked guttering. This is already covered by the Tolerable Standard.

"Rising damp" is caused by defects in the foundation of the building. This is already covered by the Tolerable Standard.

"Condensation damp" is caused by an excess of moisture in the air and poor ventilation. This causes water droplets to form on cold surfaces such as windows and walls. The risk of condensation forming is increased through daily living activities such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes. This type of damp can cause mould to form on the affected surfaces.

3. References (see also Section 8.4 - Guidance)

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- The Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Putting Safety First: a briefing note on damp and mould for social housing practitioners.

4. Scottish Housing Quality Standard

- 4.1 The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) requires that homes provided by social landlords:
 - Meet the Tolerable Standard;
 - Are free from serious disrepair;
 - Are energy efficient;
 - Have modern facilities and services; and
 - Are healthy, safe and secure.

Where a property is impacted by persistent mould or damp, installation of mechanical ventilation should be considered. If persistent mould or damp is found within a property and mechanical ventilation is not installed within either the kitchen or bathroom then the property will be regarded as failing the Healthy, Safe and Secure criteria set out in the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. For this purpose, persistent mould or damp will be recorded when 5% or more of the combined surface area of the affected area i.e. walls or ceilings.

5. Procedures and Prevention of Damp and Mould

- 5.1 Members of the Maintenance team will ensure all reports of mould and damp are recorded and actioned within a reasonable timescale. All reports will be recorded within a mould and damp register.
- 5.2 In all cases the cause of mould and/or damp will be investigated by the Association. If deemed necessary, the Maintenance Officer or senior staff may instruct an independent survey to be carried out. Any remedial action found during the inspection and/or survey will be carried out without delay in line with our repair timescales.
- 5.3 Stock condition data will be gathered to identify where properties have a greater risk of developing issues with damp and mould.
- 5.3 Where a property is deemed to be at risk for mould and damp the Maintenance Officer, Housing Services Manager, Head of Housing Services or Chief Executive may instruct continuous monitoring of the property through the installation of Environmental Sensors. Damp and mould checks will be carried out at all void properties.
- 5.4 In all cases, void properties will be inspected for mould and damp. Where damp or mould is identified in void properties, any issues will be treated before reletting the property.
- 5.5 Void checklists will include checking extractor fans and ventilation systems to ensure they are working properly. Any defects will be noted and repaired in line with the relevant repair and maintenance policies.
- 5.6 Other preventative measures, such as gutter cleaning, will be included in planned maintenance programmes.

6. Treating Mould and Damp and Ongoing Management

- 6.1 Procedures will be continually developed with the aim of tackling the root cause of damp and mould in addition to treating the effects of it.
- 6.2 To be sure efforts to treat damp and mould have been effective, initial treatments will be supplemented by a follow up check whether the problem has truly been resolved. This will take place six weeks after the initial treatment. Any issues reported by tenants in the meantime will be responded to promptly.
- 6.3 A reported case will be closed off as complete after the six-week review. If a

re-occurrence of the issue is noted after the six-week review, a new case will be recorded as a recurring issue on the mould and damp register.

- 6.4 Ongoing monitoring procedures will be developed to prevent mould and damp reoccurring. As such, the installation of indoor air quality monitoring units or smart sensors to track humidity and CO2 levels where damp and mould have been reported to be an ongoing issue may be considered.

7. Reporting and Complaints Procedure

- 7.1 All reports of damp and mould will be investigated in full. The cause of the mould and damp will not be assumed to be the result of the tenant's lifestyle unless evidence can be presented to them. When responding to damp and mould cases, staff will consider the personal characteristics of tenants and whether anybody would have an increased risk to their health from living with damp and mould. Young children, older and disabled people, and people with lung conditions, compromised immune systems and certain other health problems are at increased risk of illnesses resulting from damp and mould.
- 7.2 A mould and damp register will be held to include details of the actions taken and information required for reporting performance to the Housing Services Subcommittee and Scottish Housing Regulator within the Annual Return to the Charter.
- 7.3 Complaints from tenants will be handled in line with the Associations complaints handling procedures.
- 7.4 The organisation will implement a procedure to review complaints, assess what went wrong, and as a result make changes where needed to policies, procedures, and staff behaviour to ensure they continually improve performance.

8. Training

- 8.1 All relevant staff will be provided with training on how to effectively deal with complaints of damp and mould to ensure the issue is properly dealt with in a timeous manner.
- 8.2 All relevant staff, particularly those who may enter tenants' homes or respond to repair requests, will be trained to identify damp, and mould and understand the organisation's policies and processes for responding to it.
- 8.3 Staff who are likely to respond to reports of damp and mould must be trained and appropriately equipped to assess the issue (including safe use of PPE), identify the root cause, and respond appropriately.

9. Tenant Communication and Information

- 9.1 The Organisation will provide tenants with information about everyday activities such as: cooking, leaving clothes to dry in rooms and on radiators and taking hot showers that can cause condensation which can lead to dampness and the growth of mould.
- 9.2 The organisation will encourage tenants to report concerns around damp and mould as soon as they notice a problem arising.
- 9.3 The organisation will provide tenants with information on the risks of living with mould and damp, how to identify and report these issues, what steps the landlord will take to address the problem and expected timescales for completion of remedial works.
- 9.4 Tenants will also be provided with information on complaints procedures, for if they are not satisfied with the organisation's response, and details for the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.
- 9.5 Tenant information should be clear, easy to understand and accessible for all tenants. This may require a range of communication methods such as email, text, leaflets and tenant newsletters.

10. Data Management

- 10.1 An effective response to damp and mould cases, particularly where the problem is complex or persistent, will require knowledge of the property, the resident and historic repairs work. As such, all relevant information about properties and tenants will be recorded along with all actions taken by staff and concerns raised by tenants or third parties within the Association's mould and damp register.
- 10.2 All targets set for repairs and maintenance work, including responses to damp and mould, will be designed with effective end goals in mind. For damp and mould, a key focus of targets should be whether the issue reoccurred after the initial treatment. All necessary documentation will be recorded and made easily accessible to staff for this purpose.
- 10.3 Within the Association's damp and mould register, evidence will be collated showing the actions taken, whether treatments were successful, and how long it took to respond to requests and complaints.

For Office Use Only – Actions

Customer Consultation Required/Arranged	No
Intranet Update	Yes
F Drive Update	Yes
Website Update	Yes
Leaflet change required?	Yes
Newsletter Promotion?	Yes
Other information updated, e.g. posters, automatic email responses, post cards, answering machine messages, etc.	No
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No